

25plmcs9

26:11:26

Luggershill
Broadway
Worce

Dear Miss Ritchie

I ought to be writing
separately to Miss Ashmole
to thank her so much
for the broadsheet of

A Children's library
(bibliography) but as I
need to write to you

to-day I beg you to
thank her from me
& tell her I warmly agree
in her criticism as to

the extraordinary
determined placing of
the Bible in the list.
As a matter of fact
the list, though good

for the most part, is
a puff for Benn's own
publications - fairly well
camouflaged but still
evident.

I rather should like in my
little half-hour paper for
13th March on Our doers at
the Conference, to attempt, however
feebly, a tiny memory portrait
of Miss Mason. Now, please
will you tell me whether my
memory deceives me as to
the following points in the
impression --

her eyes were grey.

Her smile seemed to

i5p3cm429

broaden her face when
she smiled, & her ~~face~~
smile could be essentially
a humorous smile.

Even when growing old
Miss Mason had bright
eyes.

I have been reading Ourself
with growing appreciation,
& the more I see in it,
the more difficult I feel
of putting before listeners
in under 30 minutes
any adequate idea of
its range & close-knit,
consecutive argument.
I can but do my best,
however. Perhaps you
will be able to sit near

isp4cm429

me on the platform. Then,
if there is any glaring
mistake that can
be easily rectified by
you I shall be only too
pleased if you will just
utter the correction
as soon as I sit down -
we can easily apprise
Dr Lyttelton to make
this feasible. I see you
are a guest of Harard
at the luncheon, therefore
I hope you will be present
at the evening session on
13th. You see, I rather feel that
it will even help a dry
résumé of a book on ethics,
where I have no drive

to avail myself of Miss
Mason's own exquisitely
apt illustrations from
history, fiction, etc. if
I can insert just a
little touch of picturesque
description of my own
supplying that might
help strangers to see her,
& not only through the
older medium of perpetual
"way of the will", "way
of the reason", "conscience"
etc, etc, - all a little
abstract. An evening
audience is a little
different in mood, I
fancy, from even an
afternoon audience, therefore

15p6mnc429
I want to be as simple,
varied, & descriptive as
the short time at my
disposal & the nature
of my task will allow.
Yours affectionately
F. M. Parsons

~~for cent. chgs~~
~~see other corr~~

Notes & Queens Inst. R 16 plane 929
~~Parents' Union School,~~
~~Ambleside.~~

January 28th, 1928.

I think the writer of the two letters who explained that she could not read Scott to her little girl because of the knowledge of sex ~~problems~~ ^{problems} contained in the book ^{is} not abnormal. She is only typical of many parents and teachers in these days who are afraid of many things. They are afraid to teach their children the Old Testament "lest they should learn what they may have to unlearn." They are afraid to teach them the New, because they "do not hold with dogma". They are afraid to use a history book unless it is more or less colourless, lest the children should be influenced by the opinions of the writer. They are afraid to let a child read Scott's novels, lest he should get too much knowledge of life. They are afraid that if a child does not give all his time to the three R's he will not be ready for his Preparatory School. These are a few of the "fears" that have come in recent letters.

We are living in an age of hesitancy and fear, and it is not entirely due to the after-shock of the World War. It is because we have so little grip on the real things of life and no sure ground for our feet.

I associate this sense of fear with many years as a pupil at ~~Girls' Public~~ ~~Schools~~ ~~and~~ later as a teacher in a large public school. We are only slowly emerging from the purely academic ^{phase} ~~teach-~~ing which, with all the advantages bestowed by the higher education

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of women, did bring evils in its train. The clever girl, good at games, responded to all that able University women teachers expected of her, was prepared by them for public examinations, passed on to College, to return very often to her old school to carry on the Public School tradition.

But there were girls in every Form (and I was one) who drifted along never finding anything that met their needs even half way. One or two of my friends went to well-known private schools, where educated but not University women were able to find out the needs of their girls and provide for them. Most of us, however, had to struggle on as we could, cramming for examinations and never getting in touch with anything. I had University coaches in the holidays, and this work I generally enjoyed, for I was not afraid when alone with them to display the depths of my ignorance!

Forgive these personal details. They only explain the contrast in my life after I met Miss Mason and found myself in a place where knowledge in many kinds was placed within reach of all of us, unrestricted by output for examinations.

I found, too, that women who were educated in the 'fifties before higher education for women was thought of, who, like my mother, had learned history from reading biography, geography from books of travel, and were widely read in English literature, had got much more from their schools than I ever did and I was envious. Somehow the limitations of their circumstances gave them their emancipation because their minds were awakened.

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16p3 cmc429

We are now so much occupied in supplying the "seven watchmen on a tower" that we are less concerned to see that "a man's mind will often tell him more than they; "

You will think from all this I am saying small things of University education. Indeed I am not. There must always be a place for the student and for scholarship, but it is only one way of laying hold upon life, and it is not for all.

Very few have the intellectual power to plant and cultivate one seed and to live upon it. In the case of the greatest men who have done this we come upon several gardens of many flowers which they have cultivated. Most of us cannot get enough fruit to live upon without sowing many seeds of many kinds of flower. But this is where the sense of fear comes in. We cannot all have our flower beds judged by one standard. "I am thankful to see from an article in the Parents' Review that other mothers are obliged to fall short of the high ideals of the P.N.E.U. ", writes one poor mother, handicapped by many adverse circumstances.

This is why Miss Mason tells us she made her treatment of educational theory "incidental", "Not methodic", - "here a little and there a little as seemed to me most likely to meet the occasions of parents and teachers." This incidental treatment is also creative, if in another way than that of a methodic treatment, and though it probably looks casual it is really more in touch with the perplexed mother or teacher, who, confronted with a dozen different problems

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in one day, is not able to apply anything automatically as it stands, but only with understanding and in due proportion.

Miss Mason laid hold upon life in an entirely different way from the ordinary philosopher who, in order to advance one step, puts his feet into all the steps made in the same path. She read philosophy, but she worked more as a poet does.

I am reading a rather remarkable book, The Road To Xanadu, by J. L. Lowes. It is a study in the ways of the Imagination, as evidenced by Coleridge in his work chiefly in connection with The Ancient Mariner and Kubla Khan. I think it is a book that would interest you much if you have not read it (though I expect you have). May I quote two paragraphs that seem to be illuminating in connection with the point at issue? (Of course the Professor knows his Wordsworth. He could hardly track Coleridge's imagination so securely if he had not browsed upon "The Growth of a Poet's Mind" in The Prelude.)

"For the imagination never operates in a vacuum. Its stuff is always fact of some order, somehow experienced; its product is that fact transmuted. I am not forgetting that facts may swamp imagination, and remain unassimilated and untransformed. And I know, too, that this sometimes happens even with the masters. For some of the greatest poets, partly by virtue of their very greatness, have had, like Faust, two natures struggling within them. They have possessed at once the instincts of the scholar and the instincts of the artist, and it is precisely with regard to facts that these instincts perilously clash. Even Dante and Milton and Goethe sometimes clog their powerful streams with the accumulations of the scholar who shared bed and board with the poet in their mortal frames. 'The Professor still lurks in your anatomy' - 'Dir steckt der Doktor noch im Leib' - says Mephistopheles to Faust. But when, as in

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'The Ancient Mariner', the stuff that Professors and Doctors are made on has been distilled into quintessential poetry, then the passing miracle of creation has been performed.

"But 'creation', like 'creative', is one of those hypnotic words which are prone to cast a spell upon the understanding and dissolve our thinking into a haze. And out of this nebulous state of the intellect springs a strange but widely prevalent idea. The shaping spirit of imagination sits aloof, like God as he is commonly conceived, creating in some thaumaturgic fashion out of nothing its visionary world. That and that only is deemed to be 'originality' - that, and not the imperial moulding of old matter into imperishably new forms. The ways of creation are wrapt in mystery; we may only marvel, and bow the head.

"Now it is true beyond possible gainsaying that the operations which we call creative leave us in the end confronting mystery. But that is the fated terminus of all our quests. And it is chiefly through a deep-rooted reluctance to retrace, so far as they are legible, the footsteps of the creative faculty that the power is often thought of as abnormal, or at best a splendid aberration. I know full well that this reluctance springs, with most of us, from the staunch conviction that to follow the evolution of a thing of beauty is to shatter its integrity and irretrievably to mar its charm. But there are those of us who cherish the invincible belief that the glory of poetry will gain, not lose, through a recognition of the fact that the imagination works its wonders through the exercise, in the main, of normal and intelligible powers. To establish that, without blinking the ultimate mystery of genius, is to bring the workings of the shaping spirit in the sphere of art within the circle of the great moulding forces through which, in science and affairs and poetry alike, there emerges from chaotic multiplicity a unified and ordered world."

.....

"Yet no more than the lesser are these larger factors of the creative process - the storing of the Well, the Vision, and the concurrent operation of the Will - the monopoly of poetry. Through their conjunction the imagination in the

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field of science, for example, is slowly drawing the immense confusion of phenomena within the unfolding conception of an ordered universe. And its operations are essentially the same. For years, through intense and unremitting observation, Darwin had been accumulating masses of facts which pointed to a momentous conclusion. But they pointed through a maze of baffling inconsistencies. Then all at once the flash of vision came. 'I can remember,' he tells us in that precious fragment of an autobiography - 'I can remember the very spot in the road, whilst in my carriage, when to my joy the solution occurred to me'. And then, and only then, with the infinite toil of exposition, was slowly framed from the obdurate facts the great statement of the theory of evolution."

.....

"But it is of the utmost moment to more than poetry that instead of regarding the imagination as a bright but ineffectual faculty with which in some esoteric fashion poets and their kind are specially endowed, we recognize the essential oneness of its function and its ways with all the creative endeavours through which human brains, with dogged persistence, strive to discover and realize order in a chaotic world."

These quotations seem to me to illustrate Miss Mason's way of work in Ourselves.

ev She offered Ethics, but not a treatise upon Ethics. She offered "the way of the Will", the way of the Reason, the behaviour of Conscience, instructed and uninstructed.

ev. It is a modern idea to write abstract treatises upon abstract subjects. Plato offered a way of life with everyday illustrations. The Jewish Scriptures did likewise. Our Lord - may I say it reverently - did the same.

26p70mc429

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You say, "women who have missed a higher (i.e., University) education ... must feel the lack of it somewhere... they can never know really how much has been already ascertained, they have never known the apprenticeship of exact thinking."

Miss Mason read much, though her definite references in her books to other writers may seem slight. Her book reviews show more fully how much went to the criticism of a line of thought other than her own. But she never professed "scholarship". She worked not as a scholar, but as a poet.

Miss Mason's life work began before the time of University education for women. She had met Miss Clough in Ambleside before the latter went to Newnham, and Miss Clough invited Miss Mason to Newnham later on to meet, amongst other distinguished thinkers, the late Dr Westcott, Bishop of Durham, that she might discuss with them her educational ideas. This was before the meeting of 1888, held in the Hall of the College of Preceptors, when the Council of the P.N.E.U. (Miss Clough being one of them) met for the final discussion of the principles and objects of the P.N.E.U.

CP, The experience of a life-time spent, not in collecting information, but in reading and in pondering upon persons and their ways enabled her to draw upon her wealth of knowledge in discerning what was essential and what was not essential to fullness of living. She did not say of Ourselves, here is a history of ethics recognised limitations of behaviour, but, here is a way of life

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that we can enter upon this very minute. See how rich we are, let us call upon our forces, use them, beware of our dangers, recognise our vocation and serve God and man. ¶ The ways of the teacher and of the scholar are diverse. The great teacher is a creator. He aims at producing growth in the mind of his pupils. The great scholar creates by adding to the accumulated knowledge of his subject.

We most of us win the little fruits of thought that come to us by pondering upon the thoughts of others that appeal to us and that take root in our minds and grow. Few of us ever create in the sense that a poet does and this I think is what Miss Mason has done.

She often quoted to use Matthew Arnold's counsel, -

"(But that ye) think clear, feel deep, bear fruit well."

(By the way, it is curious that the Everyman Edition of Arnold's Poems gives this line as

"(But that ye) too feel deeply and bear fruit well."

Is it an emendation bringing the verse into line with current thought!!

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There are teachers who produce a sense of fear in their pupils, by their own claims to knowledge, and possibly the readiness of parents today to leave too much to others what they lack confidence for themselves may be due to this lingering sense of fear.

The humble teacher casts out fear and gives confidence for he knows that knowledge is sometimes "hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed to babes."

I think both parents and teachers would welcome some help from you in the use of ourselves. It is a difficult book to take with children. The spirit of it would be killed by the hortatory teaching of its pages, and yet there is a danger lest the children be allowed to slip over pages which are easy to read and never reach the point at issue at all. The children's answers in the examination papers show very clearly where a glib narration has never touched the child's mind, and when on the other hand he has had a teacher who has taken the book into his own mind by definite study, not only by reading the pages, but by pondering upon the points at issue. To this end Miss Mason prepared the questions set for self-study at the end of the book.

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I remember especially the chapter on Conscience which she dictated from her sofa in a large room-like balcony of a hotel in Grund (the Haus). The chapters were dictated slowly almost without a pause or correction (and sent to the printers as I wrote them to her dictation - I could not type.) Incidents of college life at Ambleside, taken no doubt from those quiet talks of which none of us knew except that we saw the light of a wider vision in the face of some student. Incidents from letters of mothers who wrote about their children. Personal letters from several friends who wrote as part of a life friendship with Miss Mason. These associations and others, her own highest thoughts, welled up from the wealth of her practical experience to illustrate her scheme of thought. Theory had no part in the penning of ourselves. Thought and its practical application was what she offered to her dear "bairns", and always thought first, because all action proceeds from thought.

Ourselves was for the most part written in the Gravel
valley of ^{the} German mountainlands, these were Life at Ambleside
Parents' Union School, Ambleside, for any leisure for

conscientious writing travels, the other volumes of the series,
Ourselves did not appear ^{in a direct} in the Parents' Union.

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Incidents from letters of mothers who wrote about their children;
Personal letters from several friends who wrote as part of a life
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highest thoughts, welled up from the wealth of her practical experience
^{the Home} to illustrate her ~~schemes of thought~~ ^{thoughts}. Theory had no part in the
penning of Ourselves. Thought and its practical application was
what she offered to her dear "bairns", and always thought first,
"because all action proceeds from thought."

For we have always a regular course of ^{day} holiday
reading - history, biography, play, novel, poetry, etc.
each ^{book} with its own allotted time in the day, and
went

17plemc429

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Ambleside.

March 9th, 1928.

Dear Mrs Franklin,

Thank you for sending me The Fairyland Within, by Olga Lazarus. I think many mothers would greatly welcome such a book. The author is evidently one who loves children and who knows how to talk to them about their difficulties and their powers. It is ~~really~~ a very attractive book for anyone who belongs to the school of philosophy to which Mrs Lazarus evidently does, but I think it would be a great mistake to set ~~a class~~ as an introduction to ourselves belonging to another school of philosophy from that of Gottelven.

I have neither the knowledge nor am I sufficiently able to discuss the merits of schools of philosophy. Fortunately perhaps for me, my business lies along one line of thought, and though I hope it does not prevent me from appreciating what is good in other lines of thought, we cannot confuse things that are different.

Mrs Lazarus considers that the executive power in a child's life is the Reason (page 130), "the great judge of our beliefs", and it seems to me that she rather puts the Reason in place of ^{the} ~~the child's~~ ^(instincts/Conscience) ~~instincts/Conscience~~ the child. ~~And~~ ^{And} ~~the~~ ^{reference} to the Will is so slight that I think many people might read the book without realising that it is even referred to, though there is quite a good reference to it on page 141.

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The other two weapons given to a child to wield are self-suggestion and self-control. Miss Mason's philosophy definitely rules self-suggestion out of court, and I think anyone who has seen a small reserved child exercising self-control and going through a kind of martyrdom must bless Miss Mason for her teaching on the exercise of the will by change of thought.

Again, too, the author puts the burden of the sub-conscious mind on to a child, - a region which to many of us is rather a Chamber of Horrors. Miss Mason, on the other hand, gives a child a sense of freedom in the idea^(a) that "there is none other that fighteth for us but only Thou, O God", and^(b) that temptation comes to a child from without, in the first place, only from within when he has entered into temptation. To make a child his own centre for temptation, for help, for knowledge, for self-control, is taking away his chief help in the battle of life. A child who knows that there are ^{subliminal} enemies without which he can conquer by the help of One stronger than his enemies is far better prepared for the battle of life and for giving help to others than if he is thrown back on himself at every point. A little child is all outgoing, and the things that influence him are all in-coming, from without, and this is what constitutes a child's real humility. Questions of sin, temptation, strength, the joy of life, fall into line with a child's natural dependence and humility as Miss Mason treats them, and beautiful as are many of the thoughts in Mrs

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Lazarus' book, they seem ~~to~~ to lay a very great burden upon the child.

These are only a few thoughts that have occurred to me in briefly looking through Mrs Lazarus' book. It would be quite possible to review the book, and to recommend it for for mothers who follow Mrs Lazarus' school of ethics, but, as I said before, it could not be a preparation for ourselves; it is another line of thought upon the same subject.

I think if Mrs Lazarus could see a copy of our Synopsis she would understand (as Mrs Hopkinson did when I wrote to her about her book and sent her one) that we could not adopt a book at variance with it. You will, perhaps, remember that Mrs Hopkinson wrote most kindly and said that she had no idea we stood for any special line of thought.

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Dear Mrs Franklin,

Thank you for your very kind and interesting letter, and for seeing the points of view that I have tried to make with regard to "Ourselves". I will certainly keep my letter and make use of it some time, but wait anyway until after Mrs Clement Parsons has published her paper on "Ourselves". It might then be thought that the references to "Ourselevs" were the result of a question raised by her paper.

I have made no dictum as to University training. I think for many men and women it is a rare privilege and a most delightful experience, and I should certainly be very sorry to let any youth in whom I had an interest miss the opportunity of going to either Oxford or Cambridge. I should certainly not for one moment try to deter a suitable girl, also, from going to the University, but I am not at all sure that it is our business as disciples of Miss Mason to urge a University course generally after P.U.S., at 17. I know it has made an enormous difference to such girls as Nancy Samuel and Dorothy Prescott, and certainly when I have the pleasure, as I had last week, of having Evelyn Plumtre next to me, ~~she is~~ I have no doubt but that she was a suitable candidate and has had a most delightful experience at Cambridge. I know, too, that we are following out Miss Mason's wish in making it possible for girls to take the C.S.C. with exemption, and go straight from the P.U.S. to the University, but it seems to me that there is a much wider ~~into~~ question that we must face as a Society, and I know too that your wide outlook on life and your understanding of women's work ~~is~~ *is* *in* *the* *main*

We must look at the education of women from all points of view. University education as the goal for most women is more fashionable than it ever was. The Universities are over-crowded, and the authorities are perplexed as to how to cope with the numbers of women and keep a due proportion between the men and women candidates.

There is a still further question to be considered, and that is the after-life of such women. There is a comparatively small area in which such women can work. The market for specialist teachers is greatly overstocked. The possibilities of research work are confined to the few who reach the very top of the tree, and even here I gather that work is restricted. ~~But~~ I had a letter only yesterday from the mother of a most brilliant science student who has taken his degree at Oxford and has the most splendid testimonials and won a research scholarship and now is doing his best to try and get a post in a boys' school as he can not hear of any other work. You know as well as I do that University women with

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Honours degrees are now taking any kind of secretarial work because work is so scarce, and though I suppose the demand for women doctors is as great as ever on account of the openings overseas, this seems to me the only profession where the chances of work are not extremely limited.

But it is not even a question of the possibilities of work after a University career, but of a feeling that is growing up against University education for every woman. Dr Norwood has already made a protest about the examination of boys and girls for the same kinds of certificates, and the Headmistresses have come down upon him severely, but I fancy he is only voicing what the Professors of some of the Colleges are feeling with regard to the women students. I am sending you a note of a conversation Miss Cholmondeley had with a distinguished Professor. L She was staying with him when the class lists came out, and he was much disturbed at some of the results. I have got her to jot down for me the substance of what he said.

W.A.

18p30m1429

There is something very unfortunate about the University training of women. They ~~get~~ ^{obtain the same} degrees as men get they ~~do~~ are not able to acquire the same education by obtaining them. They often get a degree with no real education. This is owing to women's great capacity for sensing & reflecting the knowledge & opinions of their professors & of the books they read without serious or laboured thought. It is upon this faculty that the greater number of degrees are obtained by women, with very

18p4cm429

little educational value attached to the process.

Women only can attack this question & see to it that they are being educated in a true sense. It needs a some great pioneer among women to set the matter right,

(This refers to the rank & file of women graduates not to the especially brilliant but it applies to about 80% of them)

28p5cm429

I suppose it is like the old fable of the man and woman who met at the top of a mountain. The woman had arrived there, she did not know how, and man knew every step of the way to the top. There are exceptional women, like Miss Mason, who have the woman's natural gift, a strong power of intuition, and who still retain the power of retracing every step to the point to which their intuition has led them. Of course it was this that Miss Mason felt so strongly, that if the mind were fed it would grow and would support the perceptions of the spirit.

It seems to me that the P.N.E.U. has another severe task before it at the present moment, and that we cannot yet feel we have carried to a successful issue the education for which we stand. Miss Cholmondeley's Professor thinks that only the women themselves can attack the question, but I believe in the P.N.E.U. we have a body of opinion, both of men and women, which should help towards the solution of this problem. We are sure that High School education is at fault, and that is the reason that University education is not more satisfactory; that the Universities do not get the chance with the women who come to them straight from the ordinary High School. I think it works the other way too, and as schools become more permeated with Miss Mason's idea of a liberal education for all, the Universities will have to take a different view of University education. The competition is so keen that many of the Universities now will only take Honours students. I heard the other day that Westfield, which certainly started on the lines of a much more liberal education than many of the Colleges, is now closing its doors to any but Honours students. It seems to me when I

this
in fact

ilp6cm429

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think of it that our work has hardly begun, more especially since the vast increase in University education through Provincial Universities, and here the difficulty is enormously greater, since many of the students are not resident and hardly come into touch with the life of the University at all, except in connection with their lectures. We cannot agree with Dr Norwood that boys and girls must not have the same opportunities, but I feel there is a great deal of truth in what Miss Cholmondeley's Professor says, and I think the two things must be connected together and we must face what is really one problem, which is that men and women are not the same in all their powers, - they supplement and complement each other - and that as a Society it is our duty to see that our P.U.S. children are for the most part trained for life in some way that shall bring more fullness of living than is possible in the ordinary University College.

has

Do please think this over. I expect you have heard from Miss Parish what a delightful visit we have had from Lord and Lady Aberdeen. It was most generous, the way they gave themselves to little talks with everybody during the few hours they were with us. Miss Parish so cleverly organised it all that all in the house felt that they had had a little bit of our distinguished guests all to themselves.

18p7amc429

Low Aberdeen said to one of the students,

"It must be easy here to have such

interesting conversation when you learn

so many things. At Cambridge I found

conversation dull. You either sat next

to a man who could only talk on his

"specialist" subject, or, you sat next

to a man who could only talk of the

sport to which he gave all his thoughts.

PS

P.S. Since writing the above Education^{18p8 am 429}
for February 5th has come + I enclose
an editorial comment on the
appointment of the Headmaster
of the new Weston Park School. Don't you
think it is a very wonderful admission
for the official organ of Education
Committees?

"It seems ^{is probable} to ^{indicate} ~~be~~ ^{the} ~~point~~ ^{to} ~~the~~

the real point-at issue. The Universities
offer no personal training + the majority
of students leave ^{the} without ^{the} vocation that
makes a personal training worthwhile.

18p100mc429

Many fathers still think that a university-
career implies their sons for the hard work
of an office or, indeed, for any work which
entails "drudgery" of any sort. Their proper to
send their boys straight to ~~promote~~ Public Schools
into the office, the ~~dearly~~ counting-
house, the engineer's shed, ^{lost} at the
university they should lose ^{any} the capacity
for hard work which ~~might~~ ^{may} have
given them

28pl1cm439

This is not an educational point of view
many mothers & fathers risk a
university education in spite of it!!

All the same they would be the first
to welcome a ^{change of outlook in the} ~~university~~ ^{college}
authorities, ^{view} ~~view~~ education as a life and ^{not} ~~not~~ ^{in a subject}
~~career~~ ^{which} preparing their sons &
^{as a vocation}

daughters ~~for life / not for subjects as~~

~~an end in themselves.~~ Education ~~is~~ ^{not only}
of the Training Colleges but all ~~colleges~~ ^{life} is
limited by academic considerations.